



NEWSLETTER

6th October 2023



It has been another busy but productive week across the primary school, although it has felt a little empty without our Year 6 children and staff! Those of you with children in Year 6 will know that they have had an exciting week away and the regular Parent Hub messages have been keeping us well informed of all the fantastic experiences and activities on offer. I am sure there will be some tired children tonight and probably an early night needed!

It was wonderful to welcome back our Year 6 children, staff and volunteers today as they returned from a rewarding week away at the **Rock UK Summit Centre** in South Wales. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Year 6 parents and carers for trusting us with your amazing children. Also a huge thank you to all the school staff and parent volunteers who were away this week looking after the children and keeping them safe. It is always a pleasure to be part of these residential experiences but it is also extremely tiring!

Thank you to all those parents/carers with children in Year 1 and Year 2 (Key Stage 1) who attended our Parents' Information Evening on Wednesday. The Key Stage 1 staff and I were delighted to see you and hope you found the session informative as well as giving you some 'top tips' on how to support your child across the course of this academic year. At the end of the session I had a few parents/carers of children in Year 2 asking about the application process for Year 3 places and continuation in to Key Stage 2. I will be writing to all parents/carers of children in Year 2 soon to clarify the process, but to give you advanced warning the parents/carers of children in Year 2 this academic year WILL need to apply through the Local Authority for Year 3 places for September 2024. This will be the final year that this exercise has to happen as we are now a primary school. Unfortunately the consultation and amalgamation process did not happen quickly enough to prevent this year's Year 2 cohort from benefitting from the new primary school structure. Moving forward there will be no need to apply for Year 3 places after this academic year.

Finally I would like to remind you that we are still collecting harvest produce and items for the **Brentwood Foodbank** and very much rely on your support to ensure we have a generous amount to donate. At present we have a growing but modest amount of food items in each class and on display in the Key Stage 1 hall and would urge you to try and pop a few extra items in your shopping basket or trolley. We will continue collecting harvest donations up until the end of this half term (20th October). So if you have not yet donated – it's not too late!!

REMINDER: Primary School Office



As we get used to the new systems and routines as a primary school I wanted to once again remind you of the process and protocols for accessing the School Office.

The MAIN School Office is situated in the former Junior School and all general enquiries must go to this office. This includes all visitors to the school and all parents dropping off and picking up children during the school day. All late arrivals **MUST** report to the main School Office to ensure your child is marked as present and that we are aware of them being on site and in school. Once you have checked in to the main School Office you may be directed to take your child (EYFS & Key Stage 1) to the Finance Office (former Infant School Office) to gain access to the school. Please **DO NOT** report to the Finance Office before you have been to the Main Office. The same goes for when you may have reason to

pick your child up early from school. You must go to the Main School Office and your child will be located for you.

I understand that it is a new way of working and can seem confusing, but in order to safeguard our children and ensure we know which children are on site and in school it is imperative that we follow these processes. At present the staff in the Finance Office are spending a great deal of time redirecting parents/carers to the correct place which is unnecessary.

In the last newsletter I highlighted the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality. Sadly, we are still seeing a large number of children arriving late for school on a regular basis. This is causing unnecessary disruption to your child's learning as well as to the administrative staff. Persistent lateness can lead to a penalty notice or prosecution for irregular school attendance.

Bishop Norman

We were delighted to welcome Bishop Norman, Bishop of Richborough, to our school on Friday last week to celebrate our Commissioning Eucharist and Blessing of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School. It was a wonderful and moving act of worship and a historic occasion, as our new primary school starts a new chapter in its long association in serving the children and families of Brentwood. The Holy Spirit was very much present at our service as we all promised to promote, nurture and serve our new school declaring, 'With the help of God we will!'

To mark this special occasion I am delighted to announce that our new school website has now gone 'live'! This new website is designed to capture and share the ethos, values and vision of our church primary school.

Please go to: www.stthomaspri.org

Parts of the website are still under construction and at present the website is optimised for modern wider screen PC/desktop use. For older laptops, you may need to adjust the zoom setting slightly on your first visit.

We are currently working on a mobile phone friendly version and hope to have this available very soon.

We would be very pleased to receive any feedback or comments on the new website in terms of its look, navigation and ease of finding information and documents. If you have any constructive feedback to share then please send this to admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk with 'WEBSITE' in the subject line.

The website will evolve over the course of this academic year as documents are updated and the Governing Body ratify new policies, processes and systems.



Pupil Attendance Policy

At the beginning of this new academic year, the Governing Body have reviewed, updated and ratified the following policy:

- Pupil Attendance Policy (September 2023)

This policy is now freely accessible from the school website (www.stthomaspri.org) and can be located from our home page: Key Information → School Policies.

I would particularly like to draw your attention to the Attendance Policy (Annex B) as this incorporates the Essex Code of Conduct, Penalty Notice for Parents of Truants and Parents of Pupils Excluded from School, Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 23.

Midday Assistant Vacancy – We Still Need You!!

WE NEED YOU!



We still have a vacancy for a Midday Assistant (MDA) role in school to assist in the care and welfare of the children during the lunchtime period. The hours are 11:55a.m. – 1:15p.m. Monday to Friday. No previous experience is necessary and training will be provided. Any successful applicants will be subject to pre-employment checks including a DBS disclosure.

If you are interested in this opportunity and becoming part of our fantastic MDA team or would like to find out more information please give your details to the School Office. We will then arrange for an application pack to be sent to you with further details.

Key Stage 2 School Stationery Shop

We often have children in Key Stage 2 who have items missing from their pencil case either because they have been lost or broken. It is very important that all children are properly equipped for school each day and have the correct equipment to be able to access their learning. In order to help alleviate this problem we will continue to run our School Stationery Shop with a range of essentials that are competitively priced.

The shop will be open every week on a **Wednesday** during morning break (10:30-10:45a.m.) Mrs Dansey will 'man' the shop and be very happy to assist your child in purchasing any of the items below. Please ensure children bring in cash only and the correct money where at all possible. We do not have lots of change!



Glue Stick	£1
Whiteboard Pen	50p
Pencil	15p
Handwriting Pen	40p
150mm Ruler	15p
Rubbers	20p
2-hole Pencil Sharpener	70p
Purple Pen	25p

C.A.T.S 2023-2024

Since the last newsletter we have chosen the Children Able To Speak (CATS) who have been successfully nominated and elected by their peers to represent their classes this year. The CATS members (School Council) will be involved in charitable work as well as decision making this year and be used to share and express their opinions about our primary school. This is a very privileged position and one which comes with great responsibility. Below are the names of the children who make up our new CATS group. Congratulations to:

Key Stage 1

2P – Tia-Rose Wall & Harry Durrant **2B** – Alfie Prowse & Oliver White **21B** – Lek De'Milia & Hannah Shah

Lower School

3DW – Rex Sanderson

3BW – Albert Laws

4M – Lucy Connell

4B – Freya Rourke

4S – Matilda Bannister

Upper School

5S – Harriet Ricketts

5A – Hannah Tilden

6P – Eliza Shafaat

6G – Emily Miller

6M – Matthew Perks

REMINDER – Winter School Uniform

With the autumnal weather starting to make an appearance it is time to start getting ready for the colder winter months ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that **AFTER** the October half term holiday all children must be wearing winter uniform.

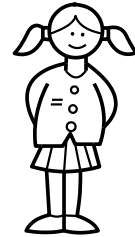
GIRLS' UNIFORM

Winter

[Must be worn for the second half of the autumn term and spring term]

EYFS/KS1

Grey skirt or pinafore dress, ***white polo shirt, *bottle green cardigan or jumper**, White/grey/black socks or plain green/grey/black tights.



Key Stage 2

Grey skirt or pinafore dress,
white shirt, school tie,
***bottle green cardigan or jumper**,
White/grey/black socks or plain green/grey/black tights.

BOYS' UNIFORM

Winter

[Must be worn for the second half of the autumn term and spring term]

EYFS/KS1

Grey trousers (or shorts), ***white polo shirt, *bottle green jumper**
Grey or black socks only.



Key Stage 2

Grey trousers (or shorts),
white shirt, school tie,
***bottle green jumper**,
Grey or black socks only.

This means all children in Key Stage 2 wearing ties and white shirts with collars.

Shoes need to be sensible black leather with soft soles. We do not like lights or toys in the shoes so please bear this in mind when you are purchasing any new shoes, especially from Clarks.

Jewellery can cause problems in school due to Health & Safety requirements. Children may wear an inexpensive watch (no Smart watches) to school providing it is not too big or colourful and they will not be distracted by wearing it. No bracelets, rings or necklaces are permitted. Children are not allowed to wear earrings for PE under any circumstances so it makes sense to leave these at home altogether. However, if you insist on your child wearing earrings please ensure they are plain gold or silver studs and that they are capable of taking their earrings out themselves.

May I also remind you that long hair must be tied back with a black, white or green hairband. We prefer boys to have short hair. Children's hair should not be coloured or have patterns shaved into it.

MarvellousMe Reminder



Thank you to the 410 parents who have already signed up to the MarvellousMe app – this is **78%** of our school population! It is a great way for us to share with you the successes that your children are having in school either as a class or individually. If you have not yet signed up...you are missing out!! It would be great to see more families engaged and get as close to 100% as possible. The MarvellousMe team tell us that 85% is average and I am sure we can do better. If you have lost your sign up letter or mislaid your unique code which relates to your child then please contact the School Office via email and we will resend. Many thanks for your support with this exciting new initiative!

Finally....

Over the past week and continuing up to the end of November 2023 we are hosting parent tours of the Primary School for prospective parents and carers who have a child due to start school in September 2024. Already we have welcomed a good number of families who are considering St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School for the start of their child's school career. If you have family or friends who would be interested in visiting our school then please do encourage them to telephone the School Office and book in for a tour – we would be delighted to see them!

IMPORTANT REMINDER - As you are well aware, the statutory closing date for applications from parents of Year 6 children (for a secondary school place in Year 7 from September 2024) is **31st October 2023.**

I would like to remind any parents of Year 6 children who have yet to submit an application, that they must do so by 31st October 2023.

Applications can be made via the Essex website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

You might also find it useful to watch the following link: <https://youtu.be/Q0a8fi06WKY>

Thank you for your continued support this term and I would ask you to keep the life and work of our school in your prayers.

Mr D. Moran
Headteacher